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**WILLISTON CPA FIRM PROVIDES SCHOLARSHIP TO  
WOMEN'S SMALL BUSINESS PROGRAM**

**WILLISTON, Vt., Feb. 16, 2015** – Davis & Hodgdon Associates has awarded a \$1,500 “Start Up” scholarship to a student of the 2015 Mercy Connections’ Women’s Small Business Program (WSBP). Megan Stearns of Burlington, Vt. will receive the scholarship towards her tuition for the 2015 winter/spring WSBP “Start Up” session. Megan is an animal portraiture artist and has recognized great potential for turning this focus into a profitable business venture. She is currently the director of communications for Let’s Grow Kids and worked previously at the Humane Society of Chittenden County.

“Our goal is to support a thriving business community made up of economically independent and engaged individuals”, said John Davis, managing partner of Davis & Hodgdon. “Our long-term partnership with Mercy Connections is a perfect fit for us. We feel our efforts with the Women’s Small Business Program will create a significant impact because their mission to strengthen our local community through the promotion of entrepreneurs is so closely aligned with our own.”

The WSBP Start Up program is an intense 15-week course and functions like a mini-MBA. Students complete a business plan and become immersed in the reality of the business world with a curriculum focused on finance, marketing, and business management.

In addition to the annual scholarship, Davis & Hodgdon will provide Start Up students and alumni with business plan reviews, accounting software set up, and bookkeeping training to help them get started.

The new “signature partnership” between Davis & Hodgdon and Mercy Connections was created to develop deeper impacts within the community as it leverages the expertise of each organization, allowing for a concentrated sustainable social mission effort. The signature partnership model is part of the firm’s new corporate social responsibility policy developed specifically for implementation for small businesses.

“It is a genuine privilege and honor for Mercy Connections to be in partnership with Davis & Hodgdon, said Dolly Fleming, executive director of Mercy Connections. “This is an optimal time to embark on a strategic partnership with Davis & Hodgdon. Not only are we committed to ensuring program results and relevancy, we hope to expand our Women’s Small Business Program offerings and explore a social

enterprise. This partnership is a fine example of cross sector synergy with a focus on building a stronger community.”

Mercy Connections is an educational values-driven non-profit organization living the legacy of the Sisters of Mercy with an enduring concern for women. By compassionately nurturing self-sufficiency through education, mentoring, entrepreneurship and community, people are empowered to make significant life changes. The WSBP was developed to empower women with the information and resources needed to develop and polish their entrepreneurial aptitude and achieve economic independence.

For more information about Davis & Hodgdon’s CSR policy including the strategic partnership please visit: <http://www.dh-cpa.com/assets/files/pdf/CSR-Summary.pdf>.

Davis & Hodgdon Associates CPAs is a full-service public accounting firm and members of the Vermont Businesses for Social Responsibility (VBSR), Vermont Business Environmental Partnership (VBEP), Lake Champlain Regional Chamber of Commerce (LCRCC), and Women Business Owners Network (WBON). The firm serves its clients by providing progressive, proactive services through expert staff, high-end technology, and unparalleled efficiency.

From left to right: Bret Hodgdon and John Davis, partners, Davis & Hodgdon, Megan Stearns, Gwen Pokalo, director of WSBP, Mercy Connections, Dolly Fleming, executive director, Mercy Connections.



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